UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/47/PV.20
12 October 1992

ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 1 October 1992, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. GANEV	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. FONSECA (Vice-President)	(Cape Verde)
later:	Mr. GANEV (President)	(Bulgaria)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Ould Moine (Mauritania)
Mr. Jeszenszky (Hungary)
Mr. Touré (Mali)
Mr. Peres (Israel)

Address by Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

92-61285 1548V (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. OULD MOINE (Mauritania) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure, at the outset of my statement, to congratulate you warmly on behalf of the Mauritanian delegation on your unanimous election to the presidency of our Assembly. We are confident that your ability, political experience and diplomatic skills will enable you to guide this session to its desired goals.

We should like to extend our thanks also to your predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the judicious manner in which he conducted the work of the past session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to extend to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali our warmest congratulations on the occasion of his election to the post of Secretary-General of our Organization. We should like to pay tribute to his efficiency and the positive results he has been able to achieve in the short period he has spent in office. I should like to reaffirm to him our full readiness to work with him in any way that would contribute to the performance of his tasks.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

At a time when the universal character of our Organization becomes more and more pronounced through the accession of new States to its membership, I cannot but seize this opportunity to extend to those new Members our congratulations on their accession and, in welcoming them, express our confidence that they will be a new tributary of strength to this Organization.

The year 1992 will always be a landmark on the road to a new type of dialogue-and-cooperation-oriented international relations. This is attested to by the high-level international meetings that have been held, and which have contributed to the emergence of new patterns of international relations. Examples of such meetings were the first summit of the members of the Security Council, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Dakar, and the tenth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Djakarta.

At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, it became clear to all that it is no longer acceptable that islands of wealth should persist in an ocean of poverty and that international problems cannot be solved in the absence of sincere and effective cooperation between all peoples.

In these international conditions of rapid change, the causes of democracy and human rights have undergone a marked development and the idea of linking social progress to economic development has gained more acceptance. This proves that no country or group of countries, no matter how powerful, can face up to the challenges of the age on its own, without extensive cooperation and consultation.

However, the concept of cooperation and consultation, between countries, even if it has gained acceptance in theory, has yet to be translated into actual reality.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

In this context, the Rio de Janeiro Conference was a promising start. The decision of the Earth Summit to hold negotiations with the aim of developing an international convention on the phenomenon of drought and desertification is cause for optimism. It is regrettable, however, that this natural disaster has been allocated the smallest share of the resources earmarked for the implementation of the environmental programme.

Mauritania, in which the bane of drought and desertification has become a chronic affliction, has formulated a programme of its own for combating desertification and correcting the imbalance in its environment.

Proceeding from our experience in this area, we appreciate the difficulties of the countries which suffer from this phenomenon. I should like, on this occasion, to declare our solidarity with the peoples of southern regions of Africa and the Horn of Africa who are now suffering the effects of drought.

With the ending of the cold war and its ideological conflicts, today's world faces no greater challenge than that of development. In past decades, the traditional current pattern of development proved to be deficient and incapable of achieving its goals. It is generally accepted now that alleviating poverty and even attaining a measure of economic well-being are no longer sufficient to satisfy the ambitions of mankind for progress. The social dimension of the question of development is vital for the happiness of mankind. This has proved to be true to such an extent that the advocates of absolute liberalism have come to concede that no economic progress can be achieved in the absence of a social chapter that would complement it.

Hence the hope we attach to the planned world summit on social development, as such a meeting would highlight the need to link the economic and the social in development.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

The world economic situation still causes concern. The most telling proof of this is that the developing countries, particularly in Africa, still face frustrating international conditions that are downright harmful, such as protectionism and the burden of foreign debt.

The economies of developing countries are continuously deteriorating and poverty is increasing and spreading. Unless something is done to combat this situation, it will become impossible to build a world where stability reigns. How can we talk about a new world order while nothing concrete is done to eliminate hunger, disease and ignorance? Was it not declared in the resolutions of the first summit of the member States of the Security Council that peace and prosperity are complementary and that no lasting stability can be achieved without real international cooperation to eliminate poverty and to achieve a better life for all?

And yet, there is a better chance for international cooperation because of the increasing practice of democracy in the world and increasing economic liberalism world wide. In such a context, the United Nations can play a principal role, as it is the ideal forum wherein international questions can be addressed, as best exemplified by the special session of the General Assembly in 1990 and the Rio de Janeiro summit. Those two gatherings have demonstrated that it is possible for us to conduct a dialogue between North and South and thereby to create a climate that is conducive to the promotion of development.

The reorganization of the United Nations Secretariat will be an opportunity to take into account the interests of the majority of the inhabitants of the planet who face the challenge of development, and who bear the burden of its attendant fierce struggle against backwardness, ignorance

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

and disease. In such a context, special attention should be paid to Africa. Africa is the continent that exerts strenuous efforts in facing up to the ravages of natural disasters and, at the same time, in coping with the adverse and frustrating international conditions that stifle its growth, such as a foreign debt that now exceeds US$ 225 billion.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

It has to cope with all this under the crushing impact of the increasing depletion of its sources of foreign investment. Therefore, we should provide effective support to implement the United Nations Convention on the development of Africa in the 1990s. The political support for the Convention that was announced by the latest summit in Dakar was a first step in that direction.

Fortunately, the world now witnesses marked progress in the observance of human rights. However, and regrettably, there are still dark corners where the darkness has not been pierced yet by the ray of light of freedom and tolerance. How else could we explain what is taking place today in Bosnia? How else could we explain the massacres, the destruction of property, the humiliation, and the desecration of sacred shrines? Can there be any hope of putting an end to this tragedy without more pressure on Serbia by every available legitimate means to force it to comply with the will of the international community? Is it not high time for the international community to put an end to the threats to peace and the violations of basic human rights in all the world's hotbeds of tension?

The World Conference on Human Rights scheduled for next year should provide convincing answers to such questions. For our part, we shall hold on to our conviction that the best possible way to ensure respect for human rights is to consider them as universal standards that must be applied in all cases, to all, without distinction. In other words, we should not confine ourselves to condemning repressive practices whenever this serves our interests and purposes. We sincerely hope that the future Vienna summit will succeed in affirming the purely humane nature of human rights as far away as possible from political or ideological considerations.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

While we are concerned about the world economic situation and its effects on international relations at the present time, we are hopeful that the increasing development of democratic practices will lead to more harmonious relations between countries. Mauritanians feel proud of their country's contribution in this respect.

The democratic process which was launched by the Correction Movement on 12 December 1984, has culminated, this year, in the holding of presidential and legislative assembly elections within a context of political pluralism. The gradualist approach adopted in achieving this has proved to be the best way of avoiding the shocks of sudden change. Municipal elections, in various stages, gave the citizen the necessary lessons and sufficient experience to acquire a spirit of tolerance, and also tested the electoral machinery.

The Mauritanian people have voted on a constitution embodying a full multiparty system for the first time in the history of the country. This constitution, which was voted upon and ratified on 12 July 1991, makes provision for all the freedoms that are set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Consequently, it provides an effective basis for the rule of law under which every citizen will enjoy freedom and justice. In support of this qualitative transition, there has been a general amnesty that covered all political crimes and misdemeanours committed since the country became independent. We are therefore very happy to state that in our country today we do not have a single political prisoner.

We have passed laws on the freedom of the press and freedom of political parties and political assembly which have led to the publication of 40 independent newspapers and to the establishment of 16 political parties in addition to various cultural and scientific organizations. This process has

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

culminated in three major events: the presidential elections of 24 January 1992; the elections to the House of Representatives on 6 and 13 March; and the Senate elections on 3 and 10 April 1992.

All these elections took place in an atmosphere of freedom, tolerance and transparency which enabled everyone to see everything that was going on and to monitor it. That this was the case was confirmed by foreign observers who monitored the election process. Indeed, as one of those observers said, the real winner of the election race was the Mauritanian people. Mauritanians have turned their backs on the experience of single-party and non-democratic systems, and have chosen pluralism and real democracy, and, thus, have become the source of the authority and legality, as President Mo'awia Ould Sidi Ahmed al Tayeh remarked in his inaugural address.

Our struggle is not confined to our efforts to develop democracy. We have simultaneously been waging a battle of economic reform, since 1985, by means of specific plans and programmes. What is at stake here is raising the standard of living of every citizen. Included in this campaign are the efforts to eliminate illiteracy by the year 2000 and to enhance the status and rights of women. In mentioning these efforts, I should like to extend our thanks and gratitude to all the countries and international organizations and agencies that have supported our efforts to achieve a better life for our citizens.

There are clear causes for concern in the international arena. However, there are also reasons for hope. As the saying goes, life would be hard indeed were it not for hope. The Security Council has become more harmonious, which has enabled it to play a decisive role in solving international disputes. It is no coincidence that we have seen the United Nations achieving

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

more in the past two years in terms of the number of peace-keeping operations than it had been able to achieve over several decades.

Proceeding from this, can we dream that all the peoples of the world will soon get a taste of peace in view of the steps taken to reverse the arms race and limit armaments? We now see the parties to conflicts increasingly opting for dialogue and reconciliation. This should create a favourable atmosphere to end all conflicts.

Nevertheless, all these shining signs of hope along the path of progress will not be enough for the realization of peoples' aspirations for more freedom, independence and prosperity unless they go hand in hand with a serious commitment to justice.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

It would be no exaggeration to cite as an example the case of the Palestinian people, who continue to be deprived of their right to self-determination and independence while their sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), continues to be excluded and its national uprising is still being repressed.

Our welcome for the Madrid Conference and the negotiating process that emanated from it last autumn stemmed from our hopes for peace in the region. However, we make no secret of the fact that we are concerned at the course those negotiations are now taking. While the previous Government of Israel resorted to stalling and prevarication and had an "anti" position so far as any land concessions were concerned, Israel now has an administration that claims willingness for dialogue. Therefore, we hope that cooperation between this new administration and the peace-loving forces will lead to a comprehensive and definitive solution to a problem that has been with us for far too long and which has overtaxed a people which wants nothing but to achieve its rights to independence and peace. We believe the only solution is withdrawal by Israel from all the Arab-occupied territories, foremost among which is the Holy City of Al-Quds, adherence by Israel to the agreed international obligations and principles and implementation by Israel of the resolutions of this Organization.

While on the subject of the Middle East and the hope that international legality may have the upper hand and put an end to the long suffering of the peoples of that area, we reaffirm our rejection of any attempt that aims at undermining the territorial integrity of Iraq and its independence as well as any action that may jeopardize the safety, security or independence of Kuwait.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

While we support fully the sisterly country of the United Arab Emirates, in its demands regarding its legitimate rights over the island of Abu Mousa, we wish to express surprise at the actions of Iran in this respect and call upon Iran to deal with this problem in accordance with the agreements between the two countries within a context of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect and brotherliness.

The achievement of the unity between the countries of the Arab Maghreb, which we have the honour of chairing this year, is a hope that all the peoples of the area look forward to in order for them to achieve their aspirations after integration, prosperity and development. An important area such as this, with more than 60 million inhabitants, coasts from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, rich economic resources and a position that makes it a geographic and cultural bridge between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, should get enough support from the United Nations to remove all the obstacles that impede its development and progress.

It is no exaggeration to state that all the Arab Maghreb has been hurt by the blockage imposed against Libya. In view of the fact that Libya has declared its full readiness to cooperate with the United Nations and in view of the constructive proposals contained in the Arab League's decision 5092 of 12 September 1992, we hope the international community will show understanding for this fair position and reach a solution that will satisfy all and spare the Maghreb problems it can do without.

In the Western Sahara, the United Nations, in coordination with the Organization of African Unity, continues to deploy efforts which aim at overcoming obstacles in the field so that suspicion may not replace the early optimism that prevailed in the area in the wake of the signing of the cease-fire agreement on 6 September 1991.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

We are determined to continue efforts that would lead our Moroccan and Sahraoui brethren to a permanent peace that, no doubt, will be a vital factor in building the Arab Maghreb.

The resumption of diplomatic relations between Mauritania and Senegal last April, the resumption of daily flights between the two countries and the opening of borders indicate the turning of a new leaf in the relations of the two countries. The resumption of cooperation between our two peoples is proof that the leaders of both countries are determined to put behind them this painful era in order for the two countries to focus on winning the battle for development.

The last Nouakchott summit which brought together the leaders of Mali, Senegal and Mauritania with the aim of achieving the goals of the organization of the investment of the Senegal river, was a model to be followed in the area of common African action.

In South Africa, the road to the establishment of a real non-racial democratic system is still full of obstacles despite the progress achieved over the past two years. The most dangerous obstacle is the violence that, in five years, has claimed the lives of thousands of people. Consequently, the international community should remain vigilant until the objectives of the United Nations declaration of 14 December 1989 have been achieved in full.

Despite the tragedies and evils and atrocities that sadden the heart in Somalia, there are still hearts that are full of goodness. In this context, we must express gratitude to those who have helped Somalia and have made every effort to ensure arrival of their humanitarian assistance to it in the face of considerable difficulties. To all those I extend the thanks of my country and I appeal to our brethren in Somalia to let reason reign, put the national interest first and try to resolve their problems democratically, by dialogue.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

In Latin America, as in Asia, we have seen how democratic development and dialogue have helped to solve many thorny problems and disputes. Two years after resolving the question of Nicaragua, peace reigns in El Salvador.

The most important event in Afghanistan was the accession to power by the Mujahideen after a long devastating war. Our recognition of the new authorities in Afghanistan was an expression of our satisfaction with this development. We hope that Afghanistan, after the return of its sons, will be able to overcome factional strife and, thereby, embark on a much needed process of national reconstruction.

(Mr. Ould Moine, Mauritania)

We reiterate our support for the Paris Agreements on Cambodia, which commit all political factions to work for peace in that country. We regret the delay in implementing some of the items of those Agreements, and feel that a careful study should be made of the reasons behind such delay with a view to determining the type of measures that would enable the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia to discharge their task as fully as possible.

There is no doubt that accession by the two Koreas to the membership of the United Nations is an event that justifies the hope that Korea will be unified eventually by peaceful means, through dialogue and consultation.

The United Nations stands today at an important crossroads. The Organization must regain its prestige in order for it to be able to rise to the many challenges posed by the international changes on the horizon. In this context, the reorganization of the Secretariat would enable us to find the right instrument to face up to those coming challenges in which the question of development should be paramount. We have great hopes that this new era will create an appropriate atmosphere for new, more equitable and democratic international relations. Nothing can help achieve these aspirations of all peoples and nations more than justice and democracy.

Mr. JESZENSZKY (Hungary): Allow me to express to you my sincere congratulations on your election as President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. At the same time, let me once again wish much success to the Secretary-General of our Organization.

The scale of the changes that have taken place lately on the international scene is amply demonstrated by the sheer number of new delegations that have joined our ranks at the United Nations. In large areas of our globe, which were shown on the map hitherto only by single-coloured

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

expanses representing federations held together by totalitarian power, we see today a colourful collection of independent States that have regained or are about to gain their sovereignty. There are few countries whose external relations have been affected by these changes as directly and as deeply as ours. The number of Hungary's neighbours has grown from five to seven, and five of them will be shown as independent States only on maps that are to be published in the coming months.

Two years ago, when I first had the opportunity to address this forum as the representative of a Hungarian government formed following the first free elections in 45 years, I returned home convinced that the fresh breeze of history was having a reinvigorating effect on the activities of the United Nations as well. The downfall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe not only opened a new chapter in the lives of the peoples of the region, but set on a new course the whole system of international relations. The ensuing total collapse of the bipolar world system and the fading away of the paralysing effect of great-Power confrontation raised particularly high expectations. It appeared that the world Organization would be able to respond effectively in all instances to the challenges to international peace and security.

These hopes and expectations, and the faith of some in a swift and radical renewal, are contrasted today by many with the present situation in the world and at the United Nations. Certain sectors of the public view the events of the last year as a dissipation of the hopes fostered by the historic turn of events in 1989 and 1990. They cite the tragedies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Somalia, Karabakh, Abkhazia and other regions, the grave and massive violations of human rights, and the persistence of serious

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

economic and social tensions in the world, and reproach the world Organization for not managing the crises effectively. However, we have to show that the United Nations has not retreated from the role it played - and regarded as a historic milestone - when the Coalition forces, on the basis of the Security Council's authorization, acted against the aggressor and liberated Kuwait.

An important stage in this field was the summit meeting of the Security Council in January, which renewed the commitment of the Member States to the collective security system of the United Nations. As a result of this meeting, it seems that preventive diplomacy has now entered the minds of political decision makers as a most promising method of crisis management.

We set high value on the substantive and action-oriented report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277) that the Secretary-General has prepared on the Security Council's initiative. In our view, it makes good use of the possibilities inherent in the Charter and may serve as a good point of departure for the efforts directed at enhancing the effectiveness of the crisis-prevention, peacemaking, peace-building and peace-keeping role of the United Nations.

Now that the relationship between the great Powers is determined not by opposition but agreement and a consistent search for consensus, the dust can be blown off those chapters of the Charter that are related to the international collective security system and had almost become a historic relic. We also concur with the Secretary-General's recommendations concerning a stronger role for the International Court of Justice and the regional organizations. In this connection, I wish to announce that the Hungarian Government, empowered by a recent decision of the parliament, will deposit with the Secretary-General the declaration recognizing as compulsory the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

In view of the fact that the emergence of regional hotbeds of tension is often engendered by conflicts within individual States, one can rightly say in connection with the Agenda for Peace that the viability of preventive diplomacy depends to a decisive extent on how we deal with the relationship between the sovereignty of the State concerned and the preventive measures taken by the international community.

Even if an internal conflict can be localized and does not transcend the borders of the country, it has a direct effect on the situation and stability of neighbouring States and, thus, on international peace and security: the strands of bilateral and multilateral political and economic cooperation are weakened, instability emerges, an atmosphere of mistrust prevails, there are massive flows of refugees, environmental damage from the conflict spills over, and so on. It must be stated that in our world today, preventive diplomacy can succeed so long as individual States, already at the early stages of the development of a problem, do make use in a responsible manner of the crisis-prevention possibilities provided by the world Organization and do not regard them as an impairment of their sovereignty. On the other hand, if such possibilities remain unexploited and the problems start festering, the Organization must be prepared to act resolutely, effectively and swiftly, making use of all means at its disposal against a State that threatens peace and security.

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

In the course of the crisis management of recent years the Security Council has set precedents - the latest being the condemnation of "ethnic cleansing" and of breaches of international humanitarian law in Bosnia and Herzegovina - which make it unambiguously clear that respect for human rights, including the rights of minority communities, is an integral aspect of international peace and security and can by no means be regarded as an internal affair.

It is therefore of fundamental importance that the Security Council pay close attention to grave human-rights violations in individual States. Action in this field by the international community is a legitimate manifestation of our common concern and responsibility. This constantly expanding dimension of the Security Council's activity is in accord with the Charter and should be incorporated into preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and, in particular, peace-building.

With regard to the practical tasks related to these activities at the United Nations, some progress can be made in the short run, beginning with the current session of the General Assembly. For example, we can take steps with regard to the initiative concerning the establishment, within national frameworks, of standby forces for the peacemaking and peace-keeping activities of the United Nations. Those Governments that have already made specific offers to this end have demonstrated an exemplary attitude. Hungary is ready to do likewise. We are in favour of another initiative aimed at the establishment of a temporary reserve fund to meet the initial cost of peace-keeping operations.

Hungary also supports the Secretary-General's proposal that, even on the request of only one of the parties to a conflict, international monitors could

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

be deployed on the territory, including its border areas, of the requesting party. These measures could be similar to those planned for the near future, with the support of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, in connection with the Southern Slav crisis, in the form of monitoring missions to be sent to Hungary and other States.

Central and Eastern Europe are the scene of one of the major changes in international relations. Here the scenario of almost euphoric expectations and of ensuing disillusionment is played out in an especially dramatic way. Following the demise of communism, it seemed that the outlines of a new and unifying Europe were appearing on the horizon. The States in the region were faced simultaneously with the tasks of returning to Europe, both symbolically and in reality, and of ending the conflicts that for centuries had plagued relations between their peoples. We had every right to hope that, this time, the past would not be repeated and that, with guidance through jointly proclaimed democratic ideals, the recognition of interdependence would prevail over confrontation.

For the peoples of multinational States welded together by coercion and totalitarian methods, the spread of democracy has also become an experience of national emancipation. It is a telling fact that, following more than seven decades of existence, all three federal States bordering my country recently disintegrated with tempestuous speed or are undergoing a process of disintegration. In our view, it is wrong to regard such processes as an entirely retrograde phenomenon and - contrasting them with modern integrationist tendencies - to deplore them. Internal turmoil, efforts at secession and the breakup of existing State frameworks are most likely to occur where integration does not enjoy genuine popular endorsement and where democratic mechanisms for conflict management are lacking.

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

Today the key issue of stability and security in Central and Eastern Europe is recognition and promotion of the endeavours of peoples for self-determination and of the endeavours of national minorities to secure adequate forms of self-government. This can be advanced only through the combined efforts of the parties concerned and the international community, in conformity with the basic norms of international law.

For these peoples, endeavours towards self-determination constitute the first, and apparently unavoidable, step on the road back to Europe - the road to participation in a new and voluntary integration. On the other hand - and it is gratifying to be able to say this - more and more people now recognize the compelling need to deal positively with the problem of national minorities, including those people who, only recently, persisted in denying the reality of such questions.

However, it is a mistake for anyone to seek to achieve self-determination and self-government by resurrecting the nineteenth century concept of the nation State, and it is a crime to advance that concept by redrawing frontiers by force or "ethnic cleansing". We are all well aware that attempts to create so-called ethnically pure States have more than once in history degenerated into massive tragedy, naked aggression and crimes against humanity and against minorities.

The enormous changes that are taking place in our region pose yet another pressing problem: how are we to ensure success for this unprecedented and historic transformation, which is occurring in difficult conditions? We have to cope with a hard legacy, bequeathed by the past, a legacy that is a source of complex problems to solve and of lurking dangers to avoid. The transition from dictatorship and so-called planned economies to political pluralism and

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

market economies is an uncharted path, lacking time-tested models or examples. This process involves tension and sharp internal debate, both economic and social, just as it produces unresolved external problems.

In this respect, I should like to mention the vitally important legal, ecological and navigational problems that arose along one of our fluvial frontiers as a result of the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the River Danube. Much to our regret, the bilateral talks aimed at finding a solution to the problem have so far been unproductive. We want to do everything possible to ensure that Hungary and the neighbour in question, with welcome international assistance, can find a mutually acceptable solution rather than add another source of conflict to our region, which is already ridden with tension.

The transformations sweeping through Central and Eastern Europe present another question: how are the dark shadows accompanying the rebirth of freedom and democracy to be confronted? These transformations must be protected from all extremes: from the demons of totalitarianism, of whatever colour; from the revival of various brown-shirt ideologies; and from attempts to paint over communism with national colours. All these things, with their demagogic appeal and offer of temptingly simplistic solutions, can only undermine and ruin the unsparing and strenuous efforts to establish and strengthen the rule of law.

Hungary is convinced that it will prove to be equal to the historic challenge and will bring about the triumph of the universal and lasting values of our civilization. However, the peoples of our region are far from being the only ones affected by this task and interested in mastering it. Therefore, their efforts to ensure that democratic values prevail require and deserve international support.

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

In the immediate neighbourhood of my country - in the former Yugoslavia - the gravest crimes and violations of human rights continue to occur. The Southern Slav crisis has for more than a year gravely endangered international peace and security through aggressive nationalism, dictatorial government, the forcible acquisition of territory, "ethnic cleansing", the intimidation of minorities and the daily suffering of the 2 million people who have been chased from their homes.

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

Grave responsibility for the outbreak of the crisis and the spread of the conflict to successive new areas rests with Serbian nationalism and its regular and irregular armed forces. The value judgement of the international community in that respect was expressed again as recently as last week in the relevant General Assembly resolution. We believe that the Security Council too must take further concrete measures to promote a comprehensive, lasting and equitable settlement of the crisis. It is indispensable to expand the international presence in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and to increase its effectiveness. The peace-keeping forces of the United Nations, which have earned all our recognition, should have their mandate extended, with their preventive deployment in areas where such action is warranted and has not been taken so far.

The brutality raging almost undisturbed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia is a telling signal that the world has not yet done everything possible to enforce, with all the means at its disposal, the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. The aggressor must be made aware that the international community, including the States of Europe, will under no circumstances acquiesce in situations brought about as a result of violent conquests and inhumane actions, and is prepared to cast out from among its ranks all those who would want to pull our continent back to the age of barbarism. On the threshold of a new world full of great opportunities, the United Nations must take a firm stand against aggressions and breaches of law. It is no exaggeration to say that the peace and tranquillity of present and future generations will depend on that choice.

It is with deep concern that our public opinion is following the developments of the situation of the Hungarian minority in Serbian Vojvodina

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

and other areas under Serbian control, where a Hungarian community - close to half a million - lives in increasing danger and under threat. Serbian policy not only has chased tens of thousands of Hungarians from their ancestral homes, but is now intent on settling several thousand Serbian refugees in territories of Vojvodina and Croatia inhabited by Hungarians and others, thereby forcibly changing the ethnic composition of whole areas. This is a grave violation of resolutions of the Security Council and of the decisions of the London Conference, which demands an adequate response.

Recently, Hungary has given shelter to over 80,000 refugees from the former Yugoslavia, in addition to the more than 50,000 who had arrived earlier from another neighbouring country. I know from personal experience that these refugees are eager to return, but the conditions that would enable them to do so are, unfortunately, not yet ripe. In order to create such conditions as soon as possible, we consider it necessary for the United Nations forces in the former Yugoslavia to assume an active role - in conformity with the Vance plan - to assist the safe return of the refugees, to create conditions under which the right of the returnees can be guaranteed and the prosecution of those responsible for violations of law can take place. The Hungarian side offers its full cooperation to this end.

We cannot speak of freedom, democracy, justice - and, consequently, of the rule of law - when the rights of national, ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities are not respected. The legitimate aspirations of the minorities to preserve their identity, language, culture and religion, as well as to foster relations with their mother nations, do not at all call into question their loyalty as citizens. These aspirations, therefore, cannot be regarded as a threat to the unity of the State. The various concepts of autonomy

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

arising out of a particular minority situation do not call into question the framework of the State concerned. Their purpose is to create the proper conditions for the self-government of minorities and for the exercise of their rights in a way that fits into the consitutional and legal order. Life demonstrates that orderly minorities do not weaken, on the contrary, they unequivocally strengthen the stability of the State and its internal social peace. In this connection, we sincerely welcome the settlement by Austria and Italy of the issue of Alto Adige-Sud Tirol. This example may be worth following as a democratic solution for minority problems and may serve as a credible counterargument in the face of those forces that do not tire of suggesting, by way of whispered propaganda or spectacular and noisy demonstrations, that the raising of such questions is meant only to conceal territorial demands.

The United Nations, as the most comprehensive multilateral organization, has a major role to play in the promotion of the rights of minorities. We attach particularly great significance to the completion of the draft Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. We see this as an important initial stage of a process. However, the effective protection of minorities also requires the drawing up of binding international norms. Consequently, we consider it desirable to start the relevant codification process as soon as possible.

In the field of minority protection, it is essential to introduce an institutional system of international guarantees and to create suitable fact-finding, monitoring, conciliation and counselling mechanisms, such as a complaints mechanism with the competent international forums. These forums would be empowered to investigate infringements of minority rights, identify

(Mr. Jeszenszky, Hungary)

those responsible, eliminate the consequences of the infringement of rights and compensate the injured party. In this context, mention must be made of the important step forward taken by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe with the establishment of the Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities.

We must all trust that the conflicts inevitably arising out of the radical transformations in our world will be solved through dialogue, compromise and, when necessary, recourse to international forums. Even crises and difficulties cannot eclipse the fact that since the end of the cold war the international community has become capable of taking incomparably more efficient measures than previously to deal with threats to international peace and security. Hungary is convinced that our rejuvenating world Organization will overcome the "too-little-too-late" syndrome, will also have the necessary financial resources and - as a result of the reforms already under way - will be in a better position to meet the requirements of our times. In this field, as in so many others, we must be ready to leave behind an old era that should never return.

Mr. TOURE (Mali) (interpretation from French): The delegation of the Republic of Mali, which I have the honour to lead, welcomes your outstanding election, Sir, to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. We are convinced that your great skills as a diplomat will enable you to guide the work of our Assembly wisely and effectively. I can assure you that you will receive our full cooperation throughout this session.

We also warmly congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Shihabi, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, who presided over the work of the forty-sixth session with remarkable efficiency.

Finally, we are pleased to take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who is working tirelessly for the strengthening of the United Nations, the maintenance of peace, and the flourishing of our Organization.

My delegation welcomes the new Member States, whose presence here confirms the universality of our Organization and the inestimable value of the ideals and principles contained in the Charter.

My country, Mali, has undergone profound political changes over the last two years. On 26 March 1991, at the cost of enormous sacrifice but with clarity of purpose, our people brought a monolithic dictatorial regime to an end. The united actions of democratic forces made it possible to organize a transition, to ensure the normal functioning of elections, and to establish the institutions of the Third Republic. Thus the National Conference held in Bamako from 29 July to 12 August 1991 drew up the fundamental instruments for

(Mr. Touré, Mali)

the Third Republic of Mali. The democratic process has continued in accordance with a precise electoral timetable, drawn up with the contributions and assistance of all the country's political forces. The campaigning of some 40 political parties confirmed the irreversible commitment of the country towards a political opening which is unprecedented in the history of modern Mali.

The election of the President of the Third Republic, His Excellency Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, and his official appointment on 8 June 1992 are the culmination of long years of struggle and sacrifice of an entire people. A new Coalition Government is in place and a National Assembly made up of 11 political parties is working to strengthen the administration, the rule of law and respect for human rights in the Republic of Mali.

To conclude this chapter, I should like to express the profound gratitude of the people and the Government of Mali to friendly countries and to international organizations and agencies, in particular the United Nations system, for their valuable advice and their excellent contributions to the various electoral consultations which led to the establishment of a pluralist democracy.

The young Malian democracy was nevertheless born with a serious handicap, that of the burdensome heritage of a past of several decades of dictatorship, bad management, a single-party system and quasi-indifference to the suffering of the population. This intolerable political situation, aggravated by the impact of the drought and by continuing deterioration of living conditions in arid zones, finally led to a rebellion among the nomadic population in the north in 1990. To resolve this painful problem the Government decided on a negotiated solution. Algerian mediation, along with assistance from friendly

(Mr. Touré, Mali)

countries and from certain eminent foreign personalities, made it possible for us to create an atmosphere of mutual trust. Thus on 11 April 1992 in Bamako a National Pact was signed, between the Government and all of these rebel movements, before the nation and the whole of Africa and in the presence of representatives from all continents. This agreement was accepted by all parties as an instrument of peace, solidarity and national unity.

The agreement is first an act of national will, a plan of action to combat drought and desertification, and as such falls within the scope of Agenda 21. It is also a plan for agropastoral development requiring the use of technologies adapted to arid and semi-arid zones and calling for the re-establishment of populations in a damaged and vulnerable environment. It is an integrated programme for human development designed to unleash the initiative and production potential of men and women living in these areas. Finally, it includes a strict respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of our country, but also a recognition of the right to diversity.

The fresh hope it has stirred and its implementation require the mobilization of major resources that greatly exceed our own capacities. That is why my Government appeals to the international community, to governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in cooperation, and to the good will of all to help us to implement the various programmes under the agreement. The National Pact remains for my country the ideal means for ensuring peace and security, indispensable conditions for our development.

This development is imperative, and everything will be done by the Mali Government to ensure the full implementation of all aspects of the agreement. We should like the same to hold for all signatories - old and new alike. The Mali of today which respects human rights stresses dialogue and rejects

(Mr. Touré, Mali)

violence as a means of expression. Our young democracy allows all its sons and daughters to express themselves freely and to defend their interests within the framework of political parties or associations. This context must, firstly, permit the reconciliation of hearts and spirits; secondly, it must consolidate the peace which has been restored and thus ensure resumption of the development activities in the northern regions of our country which, for lack of security, had been abandoned over the last two years by most of our development partners.

But neither the problem of the north nor the economic difficulties of the country have hampered the will or the determination of our people to take charge of and succeed in their development. These are signs of hope and pledges of success that the new conditions of democracy will reinforce.

The deterioration in the political situation in certain parts of the world is of concern to our delegation. At a time when the international community thought it had seen the last of the great human tragedies which have long darkened many regions of the world, now societies of old civilizations have been drawn into the whirlwind of fratricidal conflicts.

Mali is concerned by the situation existing in the Horn of Africa, in particular in Somalia. In addition to drought, the escalation of violence in tenacious rivalries of factions confronting one another desperately and, apparently, without any real justification, has subjected the Somali population to terrible suffering. Food shortages, endemic famine and malnutrition, and refugees flowing into neighbouring countries are all situations requiring more intensive humanitarian intervention by the United Nations to support the praiseworthy efforts of the Organization of African Unity and of many others of good will.

(Mr. Touré, Mali)

In South Africa, the delicate process of change towards the establishment of a State based on law and on fundamental principles of democracy and of respect for human rights remains fragile in many respects. The negotiations in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) offer an opening we heartily welcome. But the violence that has been provoked and encouraged by the enemies of change threatens to delay the advent of a free, democratic and multiracial South Africa.

A lessening in diplomatic isolation and the progressive lifting of economic and sports sanctions are gestures of goodwill by the international community. It is thus time for the South African Government to explore the opportunities offered to it to assume its responsibilities - all of its responsibilities - in order to halt the cycle of violence and to create conditions conducive to genuine negotiations.*

In addition, the serious crisis afflicting Liberia for several years continues despite the efforts of the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Mali hopes that the relevant decisions taken at the ECOWAS Summit in Dakar will be honoured by all the parties to this fratricidal conflict so that the West African subregion can regain its balance and stability.

---

* Mr. Fonseca (Cape Verde), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Touré, Mali)

My delegation is pleased that in Angola the process of national reconciliation has made it possible to establish a true democratic process, thus finally bringing a long-lasting tragedy to an end.

As regards Mozambique, we hope that consultation and dialogue will prevail over the use of arms.

The sensitive question of Western Sahara remains pending as we await the implementation of all the provisions of the United Nations peace plan. Mali urges all the parties concerned to let consensual approaches prevail in dealing with that thorny problem so as to enable the United Nations to accomplish its mission.

The breakup of Yugoslavia has taken the form of a cruel ethnic war, which has led the United Nations to increase its initiatives in order to put an end to the tragedy of millions of elderly people, women and children.

One of the oldest conflicts, that of the Middle East, which our Organization has dealt with for several decades, has seen encouraging developments with the opening and continuation of Israeli-Arab negotiations. The international community must encourage the process that is under way, so that contacts will lead to a just and lasting peace. For our part, Mali reaffirms its support for any initiative leading to a comprehensive and lasting solution to that conflict, which must necessarily include, first, Israel's full withdrawal from the occupied territories; secondly, the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence; and thirdly, the right of all States in the region to exist within secure and recognized borders.

We are pleased to note that the United Nations peace plan in Cambodia is now operational. This is proof that perseverance, mutual trust and dialogue are effective weapons in preventive diplomacy.

(Mr. Touré, Mali)

Turning to the Korean peninsula, Mali, which maintains good relations with both Koreas, encourages the process of direct negotiations embarked upon by both parties with a view to the peaceful reunification of the Korean homeland.

Indeed, all round the world, Mali hopes for the restoration of peace through dialogue and agreement. Once rid of the spectre of violence and war, the United Nations will be able to devote its human, technical and financial potential to the noble objectives of economic and social development, so much needed by the world.

While, politically, the beginning of the 1990s has ushered in an era of democracy for many developing countries, and most particularly for those in Africa, the economic situation of our countries remains extremely critical. Indeed, unlike the industrialized countries, where we have seen a recovery in economic activity under the triple impact of a decrease in interest rates, the return of oil prices to a level close to that existing before the crisis and the effective coordination of economic policies, in developing countries the situation has been marked, overall, by continuing serious economic and financial difficulties, deterioration of the terms of trade, a scarcity of financial resources for private investment, debt burden and grave doubts regarding the conclusions of multilateral trade negotiations and the threat of protectionism. In order to prevent the profound imbalances augured by that situation, our countries agreed to carry out structural adjustment reforms in order to open themselves up more to the world economy. However, we remain convinced that in order to emerge from the crisis and at the same time save our democratic experience, international solidarity must be made manifest. It must develop rapidly and be equal to the problems to be solved.

(Mr. Touré, Mali)

The international community must strive to free up, for the poorest countries, sufficient resources to correct the imbalances in our economies, to mitigate the effects of adjustment on the most vulnerable sectors and to permit the financing of priority programmes for basic development.

Hopes for reforms in international economic relations to reduce inequalities between the developed and the developing countries are, unfortunately, still being frustrated by a lack of progress in the establishment of an appropriate North-South dialogue. South-South cooperation and subregional economic cooperation, enabling developing countries to overcome certain difficulties through a rational use of their complementarities can also help to reopen the irreplaceable North-South dialogue.

Some progress has been achieved in subregional economic integration, but our Organization must support that process by formulating policies that will create common economic configurations at the subregional level. It is for all these reasons that the Government of Mali strongly supports the spirit of structural reform and supports the efforts of the Secretary-General in this context.

As a Sahelian country, Mali was pleased with the holding of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and is pleased with its pertinent recommendations. This is an opportunity for us to recall that in the face of the serious threats hanging over our planet, the international community as a whole must set up, for its own survival, collective management of the environment that is more responsible than it has been in the past, that is fairer and truly universal. To that end it must undertake vigorous action to put an end to the use of the countries in the South as dumps for toxic and nuclear waste from

(Mr. Touré, Mali)

industrialized countries. By the same token, we must help countries to combat desertification, pollution and all other processes that are likely to threaten the human habitat.

Our Organization has contributed to the consolidation of security and cooperation among nations. It has never been so active and effective in the service of peace. However, our most ardent desire is to see it evolve towards greater democracy so as to respond to the major changes that have occurred recently on the international scene. That democratization comes, necessarily, through taking into account all the interests of all the components of the United Nations in future reforms.

Humanity finds itself at a stage in its history that requires the international community to display pragmatism, creativity and solidarity; in brief, it must develop a fruitful system of partnership. Never in this respect has mankind possessed so many human and technological assets.

Thus, we must build together a new international order based on equity and justice.*

Mr. PERES (Israel): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, and the nation of Bulgaria, on your assumption of the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly. May I also congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, on his leadership in the struggle for peace. I wish him success in his endeavours.

Today I speak for an Israel that has chosen to step out of the shadows of the past to prepare for the invitation of a new future. The world is alive with the impulse for change. The end of conflict is no longer a Utopian

---

* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

fantasy. It is the dictate of realism and of universal self-interest. We look to the future in a world that wants peace.

Like a hidden Samson, the forces of change have pushed aside the pillars of conventional wisdom, which proclaimed that military power is the source of national strength and prestige. This is no longer true. The cost of maintaining a significantly large army can deplete the resources of the richest countries, even if the weaponry remains unused. Around our changing world, the flow of knowledge has superseded military might as the source of real strength and social stability.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

The flow of knowledge no longer stops at national frontiers. It is not possible in the age of modern communications to shield peoples from truth and reality. Eventually, even dictators must face the fact that the best censors cannot block the free flow of ideas. But knowledge cannot be acquired without the right to doubt, the readiness to change. Knowledge is not available without freedom, and so democracy is prevailing throughout the world.

In this new era, the era of knowledge, the governing principles are those of democratic structures, market-based economies, open borders, demilitarized international and regional relations, and respect for human rights. But while all nations should embrace these new principles, national traditions and identities retain their power. Nation-States will remain the focus of allegiance and social pride.

To reconcile national identity, regional cooperation and universal solidarities is the central issue of contemporary life.

The United Nations was established in an era that no longer exists. Yet its ideals and structures can meet the challenges and dangers of this new age. We support the "Agenda for Peace" offered by the Secretary-General. We support and will participate in the attempt to build a global protection system.

The United Nations must be the headquarters for an all-embracing struggle to safeguard the environment against new threats. It must be a powerhouse to arrest starvation. It must develop the institutions and the ability to intervene when necessary to stop otherwise insoluble civil wars. The United Nations must reorganize to face these problems in a global capacity.

In our own region, we must understand that even if our geography and people have not changed, the world has changed. No longer can we live on

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

disappearing premises. For generations, the conflicts in the Middle East were nurtured by global conflicts - by the cold war and hot competition. Within the context of super-Power rivalry, the belligerents in the Middle East were generously supplied with shining armour. But where there were once evil empires, we now see only the desire for a peaceful world. Russia has changed. The United States has emerged from the cold war with renewed respect from the world for its democratic drive for peace. The third world is changing, with many nations ending old hostilities and building new economies. In Africa, the forces of racism are being gradually driven out. In the Middle East itself - let's face it - the peace between Israel and Egypt is attaining the respect of age. There is a fresh atmosphere in our time.

The time is now upon us for the nations of the Middle East to come to terms with the new realities, to make a living on their own. We can learn to benefit from peaceful coexistence. If we are to survive, we must understand that the dangers and opportunities we face are regional rather than national. In an age of long-range missiles, national defence must be a collective effort. To provide our people with modern standards of living we must have open borders and mutually beneficial exchanges.

For too long the Middle East has been caught up in national conflicts and national rivalries for the glorification of national leaders. We need to build a new Middle East of, by and for the people. In our effort to build this new future for the Middle East, Israel does not ignore its still existing disagreements with our neighbours. The record shows that we are working to solve them humanely, honourably and, wherever possible, permanently. We are currently engaged in bilateral negotiations to bring an end to the conflicts of the past and multilateral negotiations to lay the foundation for the future.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

In the bilateral negotiations, we are negotiating with the Jordanians, the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Lebanese. The committed leadership of the United States has played a central role in bringing all the parties into face-to-face negotiations.

With the Jordanians, the solutions are awaiting the parties. We face common problems we must confront together, including the possible Jordanian connection to Palestinian self-government and beyond. Our relations with the Hashemite Kingdom have seen open hostilities but also tacit efforts to overcome these hostilities. We look forward to a complete peace with the Kingdom of Jordan in the near future.

With the Palestinian people, our conflict has been long and painful. We seek to end this conflict. We are looking for a bridge to cross the gulf of bitter memories, painful hatreds and emotion-laden suspicions. We have offered to negotiate an interim or transitional goal. There is no difference between the two. In fact, one can note with satisfaction that the Palestinians have agreed to this gradual approach. The direction is clear, even if the bridge will be built slowly.

The suggested path is an interim self-government arrangement, as conceived at Camp David. We know that this proposal is imperfect in some respects. Self-government is less than independence. But it offers the flexibility of an arrangement that will last no more than five years. During this limited period of time, Palestinians in the territories will enjoy self-government. The opportunity to select, through democratic political elections, a Palestinian administrative council will enable the Palestinian people to exercise a double measure of freedom: the freedom to govern their own lives and to do so politically and democratically.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

But instead of attempting to draw a map of a self-governing territory - and it is doubtful that this could be achieved now - we have suggested a definite timetable. So, while this proposal lacks the clarity of a map, it provides the commitment of a calendar. This proposal is clearly a departure from the present situation. It has the dynamics of a voyage to a new destiny, a bridge which begins at one shore and reaches another.

I know it will not be an easy choice for either side. But neither the existing situation nor the foreseeable future contains a more promising alternative. I am speaking for an Israeli Government that has firmly made up its mind and seeks the expeditious implementation of this proposal.

In negotiations, the parties tend to scrutinize every letter, every dot. I hope that the Palestinians will also perceive the spirit of our intent, which is to extricate ourselves from the position of domination over another people. We have never in our history as a people sought domination over others. We wholeheartedly seek a future where the children of both peoples will escape the agonies of a distorted past and live under a clear sky of security and hope.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

With the Syrians, we have begun a dialogue in full daylight for the first time in 44 years. It is necessary now to translate the change in the mood between our two nations into viable and carefully constructed accords expressing a mutual interest in security and cooperation.

We call for a departure from old dogmas and all-embracing dictates, and we hope the Syrians will adopt the same approach. We understand the need to safeguard the security and freedom of both nations, theirs and ours. It is our responsibility to ensure that those who have survived the wars of the past will have the opportunity to open a new peaceful chapter in the history of the two peoples.

The leaders of both countries should be directly involved in these negotiations, which are in need of a new approach and creative thinking. I call on the President of Syria to set aside his reservations and meet with the Prime Minister of Israel.

We have made clear to the Syrians that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) contain a territorial dimension, combined with other components of peace and security which must be equally respected.

We believe in a comprehensive solution involving all issues and all parties. Yet we do not consider it wise to link one negotiation to another, or to postpone an agreement with one country because of delays elsewhere. One negotiating process should not be handcuffed to another.

With respect to Lebanon, Israel holds no territorial claims; nor does it seek to influence the political destiny of that country. We recall peaceful relations with Lebanon at a time when it was internally balanced and tranquil. We hope that such a time will return again. The moment Lebanon finds peace within itself and independence from outside intervention, Lebanon and Israel will live in peace again.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

Looking at the bilateral negotiations, we recall that the success of our negotiations with Egypt stemmed from dialogue at many levels of society: decision makers, leaders, businessmen, academicians. We appeal to all our Arab neighbours to establish the same dialogue today. There is no room for timidity, reluctance or boycotts in a peace process. Peacemaking should not be a hideaway operation.

I hope our neighbours realize that Israel has implemented unilateral confidence-building measures. We have drastically changed our settlement policies, altered our policies towards the Palestinian people, offered new proposals for self-government and suggested target dates for the implementation of this process. We have done these things unconditionally. Yet confidence-building measures call for reciprocity. We seek an end to the unjustified economic boycott and the cessation of terror.

We shall not allow ourselves or our adversaries to escape this chance for peace. Yet we cannot turn our region into a new Middle East by just negotiating old disputes. Our new challenges are on our horizons, not only in our frontiers.

We say to our Arab neighbours: the real danger is not Israel. The real danger is poverty. The real danger is poverty that creates protest, even if it is occasionally cloaked in a religious mantle. Poverty and protest endanger both the Arab nations and Israel. Israel does not want to become an isolated island in an ocean of resentment.

Two hundred forty million people live today in the Middle East. The majority of them live in a state of want. In 30 years, there will be 500 million people in the region, two thirds residing in Africa, one third in Asia.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

The poverty of the Middle East has nothing to do with geography. It has to do with the use and misuse of available and potential resources in the region. The gap between wealthy and poor nations is wide: the more prosperous nations enjoy a per capita income 10 times greater than their poorer neighbours. The earth beneath us will continue to tremble if the wealthy remain oblivious to the needy, both within and beyond national borders.

The multilateral negotiations are composed of five areas: economics, arms control, refugees, ecology and water. Progress in these areas will more likely be attained if we can restructure the multilateral talks, which initially created two advantages: the cluster of issues and the participation of many Arab countries. But the talks suffer as well from loose organization, which has resulted in seminars rather than negotiations, and from the lack of a concentrated thrust to coordinate their work. We suggest the following changes.

First, the separate negotiations should be conducted in a coordinated manner.

Secondly, participation in the steering committee should be raised to the ministerial level.

Thirdly, the multilateral negotiations should be intensified through more frequent meetings for longer periods of time.

Fourthly, the Syrians and the Lebanese should participate.

Fifthly, discussion of human rights and pluralistic values should be made part of the talks so as to combine the discussion of well-defined practical issues with the pursuit of common values - very much akin to the Helsinki accords.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

And finally, the parties should agree not to postpone progress in the multilateral talks until the conclusion of the bilateral negotiations. Early planning can save crucial time for all parties without forcing irreversible commitments. And lost time cannot be regained.

The bilateral negotiations are essentially political. The multilateral negotiations are essentially economic. We live in an age when financial assistance in itself is no longer the answer to the economic needs of the Middle East. In the past, belligerency created dependence upon the financial assistance of other nations. By diminishing the need for arms and building the right economic structure, we will be able create wealth of our own. There is no need to impoverish the wealthy in order to enrich the poor. Opening borders, paving roads, introducing modern communications, and exchanging technology will generate economic growth in the Middle East.

Trade across borders is essential for economic growth. Markets transcend national boundaries. Water, tourism and commerce do not subjugate themselves to political maps. The Middle East should follow the example of the "seven tigers" in Asia, the European Common Market and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Let us understand: these regions are our competitors and they are far ahead of the Middle East in facing the new realities of the international economy. We have to build an open regional economy, for the same reasons and with the same promise that led others to do so. We have to build a common market in the Middle East.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

We have to set out upon the long and complicated road to arms control. That we can learn from the East-West negotiations and other attempts at arms control. We have to follow the patient path of confidence-building measures in the geographical and technical domains until we are able to rid the Middle East of the terror presented by weapons of mass destruction, both conventional and non-conventional. Israel has proposed the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East numerous times, and we stand ready to pursue this goal today.

We should address the problems of refugees, not by threatening to destroy the existing demographic balance, but by exploring a range of possibilities for restoring the dignity of refugees and offering them a new life.

We should act to save our fresh air and historic landscape. Ecological pollution does not respect borders, and so we have to marshal forces to save our region from the danger of uncontrolled deterioration.

Finally, the Middle East possesses vast desert land but meagre water resources. The land is static, the population is increasing and water resources are declining. Available water should be reused, and new fresh water produced from the sea. Either the land will be salinized by the sea or the sea water will be desalinized through available technology. The technology is available, and the necessary credit is attainable. We can satisfy the needs of man and land. The Middle East can be made green. It depends upon us.

Here, I believe, are the pillars of wisdom for a new Middle East: economic growth, arms control, dignity for the refugees, environmental protection and water resources, coupled with religious freedom, pluralistic values and human rights. The nations of the Middle East must work individually and collectively to meet these challenges of a changed world.

(Mr. Peres, Israel)

The agenda is ambitious. Is it merely a dream? No. It is a blueprint, and the necessary elements are within our grasp. Will these goals be achieved in our lifetime? We dare not hesitate, because the world will not wait for the Middle East. We are tragically late in making peace. If we do not face our economic challenges, we will be left hopelessly far behind.

The agenda is new. The vision was already mentioned in Proverbs:

"Wisdom builds the house.

"Good judgment makes it secure." (The Holy Bible, Proverbs 24:3)

"Wisdom prevails over strength; knowledge over brute force." (The Holy Bible, Proverbs 24:5)

We have to go to work. For us, the Jewish people, this is Rosh Hashanah, the New Year. We pray that the year to come will bring peace, freedom and prosperity to build a new Middle East for all of its people - Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Arab, Israeli - for us, and for our children.

ADDRESS BY MR. KENNEDY A. SIMMONDS, PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, His Excellency Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I bring heartfelt greetings from the Government and friendly people of Saint Kitts and Nevis, and I am particularly pleased and, indeed, honoured to be called upon to address the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Let me first join those speakers who have preceded me in congratulating the former President, Mr. Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, on his efficient and proficient handling of our past deliberations. Then I must hasten to welcome our new President, assuring you, Sir, of my country's active support and cooperation. Clearly, Mr. President, the very skilful and methodical manner in which you have been guiding and conducting our work augurs well for a productive session.

Next I wish to commend most highly our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has been serving the cause of our Organization with diligence, dignity and dexterity in the face of challenging times. The Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis welcome you, Mr. Secretary-General, to this, your first session of the General Assembly as Secretary-General, and we have every confidence in your commitment to international peace and security as the bases for democracy and development.

When we met last year for the Assembly's forty-sixth session it was in an atmosphere of great optimism. The cold war was over, Kuwait was liberated, freedom and democracy were breaking out all over Europe and in the former Soviet States, positive steps for the reduction of nuclear arms were taking place. The world waited with anticipation to reap the benefits of the all-embracing peace dividend. In my address then I said:

> "The enhancement of education, the eradication of poverty, the reduction of unemployment, the maintenance of good health, the provision of affordable housing, the adapting of science and technology to

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

socio-economic development - these must be the dividends that flow from diverting global financial resources away from the amassing of armaments, to be invested in human development. This is the challenge we face. This is the new battle we must join - and we must not fail."

(A/46/PV.25, p. 6)

It is perhaps too soon to say that we have failed, but we have certainly not succeeded. Once again, the attention of the international community has been distracted by fierce and despicable atrocities in far-flung theatres of regional conflict.

On the one hand, we are shocked by the gruesome and intense savagery of the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The reports of detention camp atrocities, indiscriminate killings, starvation and torture, seem like a reincarnation of less civilized times, and it is difficult to accept them as part of the twentieth century.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

On the other hand, the scenes of human degradation, suffering and death from starvation and disease emanating from Somalia appear at last to have jolted the conscience of the international community and stimulated a humanitarian response to the crisis.

In these theatres of civil strife, our relief efforts are disrupted by those who are seemingly untouched by human suffering. Relief convoys come under fire, and food intended for the victims of war is hijacked and ends up in the coffers of those whose very actions are perpetuating the crisis.

I am aware of the outstanding efforts of the Secretary-General to ensure that the United Nations has responded to these crises with urgency and in positive and practical ways. We must however do more. We must mobilize the resources, diplomatic and other, of the Member States to bring an end to the fighting and, secondly, we must continue to intensify the relief effort for those in need of the basic necessities of food, shelter and medicines.

It is serious cause for concern that countries in which the economy is in shambles, and in which production of goods and services is practically at a standstill, can still find the means to procure massive amounts of arms and ammunition and sustain armed conflicts for many months and even years. Here again we see resources that should be channelled to address issues of human development being diverted into weapons of destruction for the perpetration of violence.

It is therefore clear that there is also an urgent need for a reduction in both conventional and non-conventional weapons and I call upon the Assembly to pursue this objective.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

While much of our attention seems to be directed towards Eastern Europe let us be reminded that peace and development continue to elude the people of Haiti and South Africa.

The people of Haiti still cannot breathe the pure air of freedom; they still suffer under an oppressive illegal regime which blatantly and monstrously repudiated the will of the people, which was so freely and overwhelmingly expressed in the elections of December 1990.

Saint Kitts and Nevis, and indeed the entire Caribbean community, continue to condemn this dastardly assault upon the democratic process in Haiti, and we maintain our call for the restoration of constitutional democracy in Haiti. I call on the Member States of the United Nations to ostracize the illegal regime in Haiti and to take all appropriate measures to restore democracy and the constitutionally elected government in Haiti.

In the meantime we must continue and increase humanitarian assistance to the people of Haiti through international relief organizations, and ensure that our assistance reaches those who need it most. We must also be prepared to mobilize significant development assistance to Haiti when democracy is restored.

In relation to South Africa, we in the Caribbean have been strong in our condemnation of apartheid. I have no doubt that our principled stand, along with that of other countries has contributed to the eventual dismantling of the main pillars of apartheid. Encouraged by the African National Congress, and as a means of encouraging further progress, we relaxed some of the sanctions that we had imposed. The recent upsurge in violence, which appears to enjoy tacit support from elements within the ruling regime itself, must

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

cause us to doubt the sincerity of the De Klerk administration to lay apartheid in its final resting place.

The Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis call upon the General Assembly at this forty-seventh session to condemn the wanton killings in South Africa and to appeal to all parties to resume talks in good faith, for the sake of democracy and good government. We call for an end to the violence in South Africa. We urge the immediate resumption of the negotiating process towards a free and democratic South Africa. We re-emphasize our unshakable solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle and we appeal to the South African regime to exercise more effective control over its security forces. The climate for negotiation has to be restored in order to facilitate the emergence and subsequent establishment of a democratic and non-racial South Africa. We seize this opportunity to invite the international community, if necessary, to remobilize its forces in the struggle against apartheid, in the struggle for freedom, peace and democracy in South Africa.

Let us not abandon the oppressed people in South Africa. Let us stand firm instead until justice, equality and freedom become realities. The primary objective must be "one person, one vote". This is the only brand of democracy we in the Caribbean understand. This is the only brand of democracy we want for ourselves and for our brothers and sisters in South Africa.

We commend the role the United Nations has played and continues to play in respect of Arab-Israeli relations. We regard the peace talks that have started as a positive development and we urge that they be continued in good faith by all parties concerned, so that a just and lasting solution which addresses all of the issues of fundamental rights, security and economic and social development can be achieved.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

The people in developing countries are still anxiously awaiting the "peace dividend". This body of nations must work assiduously at bringing an end to conflicts, at ending hunger and starvation. We must, in short, strive to move beyond a mere crisis-response modality and shift into a posture to effect just and sustainable development throughout the world. It is a monumental task, which will require massive mobilization of resources, sensible and sensitive application of those resources, and an unprecedented level of cooperation between developed and developing countries.

There must be a major emphasis on human resource development so that the people may be empowered to drive the development process. In this decade of the disabled, and beyond, they too must be involved. My Government is making every effort to ensure that the disabled of our country are involved in the total process of mobilization. In order to increase public awareness and to assist in the development of the disabled, my Government has spearheaded a major fund-raising effort through the annual walkathon undertaken by Ministers of Government as part of our celebration of independence. We also support training programmes through our own school for the deaf and private sector support institutions.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

The people must be given the tools - education, basic infrastructure, appropriate technology transfer and the life-quality-enhancing support of affordable housing, good health care and facilities for recreation.

Instead of a massive mobilization of financial resources for developing countries, however, we are faced with reductions in concessional financing and across-the-board cuts in aid. These will hit the poorest and smallest countries hardest and undermine our efforts to reduce poverty, stimulate growth and protect the environment.

Free trade is being touted as the new panacea for all our ills. There is, however, no single prescription for the economic ailments of all countries. There is no one solution for the rich and the poor, for the industrialized and the non-industrialized, for the developed and the developing. Even within the category of developing countries, there are structural differences between small island developing countries and others. Special consideration must therefore be given to small island developing countries.

In matters of trade we cannot be equal partners. How can we, when large countries, having the benefit of economies of scale, highly developed infrastructure and modern technology, can swamp our markets with virtually any product? On the other hand, the per capita cost to us of providing the infrastructure to support an export-oriented development is higher than it is in developed countries.

In the Caribbean we recognize that we must accept the principal responsibility for progress in our own development. We have demonstrated a commitment to reform and diversification, we have taken bold initiatives

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

involving greater fiscal and economic discipline, and we are willing to do more. But we cannot do the job alone.

We have made significant progress in regional cooperation and are now poised to take further initiatives to strengthen our functional, economic and political cooperation. We know that we can do more for ourselves through more effective regional integration.

As a Caribbean people, we have to be realistic in assessing the potential impact of our regional integration process. The members of the international community too must be realistic in designing their policies for interacting with us in the Caribbean community. The fact is that, as developing countries - most of us being island developing countries in the Caribbean community - we are individually small. When taken together and looked at in the international context, we are still small, and the basic problems, inequities and vulnerabilities of small developing countries still afflict us.

We want to play an effective part in the international economic system; we want to be equal partners in the evolving global trading arrangements. In our case, however, equal does not mean identical, because we do not start from the same premise. The basic conditions and inequities which necessitated special arrangements under agreements such as the Lomé Convention, the Caribbean Basin Initiative and CARIBCAN are still present. Therefore, while we support the call for an early and successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, we urge that as we, the small island developing countries of the Caribbean, work assiduously to transform our economies, earnest consideration should be given to the continuation of preferential trading arrangements to small countries such as ours. In particular, special

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

treatment of the sensitive commodities, sugar and bananas, is vital to our stable adjustment to the changing global economic environment.

The other area for urgent action is the maintenance of concessional flows of aid to developing countries. I am aware that global recession and the recent uncertainties reflected in the financial system in Europe will put severe pressures on donor budgets and will thus encourage the trend towards the reduction of official development assistance. I must, in spite of the difficulties, renew the call for developed countries to recommit themselves to reaching the United Nations target for official development assistance amounting to 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product.

A reduction in aid would undermine our efforts to promote sustainable development and protect the environment. Yet those objectives were the very heart of the consensus reached at the historic United Nations Conference on Environment and Development - the Earth Summit - held at Rio de Janeiro in June of this year.

That conference provided us with a rare, almost unique, opportunity for global cooperation and partnership. We paused there to chart afresh the course for improving the quality of life for all peoples in our time and for future generations, through an integrated, caring and people-oriented approach to sustainable development. We left there with a clear commitment to balance the urgency of environmental preservation with the imperatives of human development.

We signed the Convention on biological diversity to encourage the rational management of natural resources, to ensure that the people of developing countries will justly gain the benefits associated with the use of their resources. We also signed the Convention on climate change, because

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

Saint Kitts and Nevis, and indeed the entire Caribbean region, are susceptible to the ravages of hurricanes, and, as island States, we are certainly vulnerable to the effects of global warming and a rise in sea level.

The execution of those Conventions must have special meaning to our women and children. The United Nations has already committed itself to devoting special attention to them. Saint Kitts and Nevis fully acknowledges the importance and contribution of our women to sustainable development. Women in my country are fully involved as equal partners in the decision-making and development processes. The rights of women and the entitlement to such rights have been integrated into my country's development policies and programmes, which are implemented by a Ministry of Women's Affairs. We recognize the strong correlation between environmentally sound development and population growth, and we provide family-planning programmes involving education, information and accessible services.

We maintain our commitment to our children through the provision of improved educational facilities and appropriate curricula, a variety of training opportunities, recreational facilities, improved housing and a strong programme of primary health care in which we maintain our standard of 100 per cent immunization against the common communicable diseases.

The importance of our marine environment to the health, welfare and total development of our Caribbean people cannot be overemphasized. Consequently reports of the impending shipment of a large quantity of plutonium through the Caribbean Sea later this month are a matter of the gravest concern to us in Saint Kitts and Nevis. This is a matter which must and will be addressed by the Caribbean community.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

I call on the international community to support us in our efforts to protect our marine environment and to prohibit the movement of hazardous waste through our region.

We in Saint Kitts and Nevis will continue to play our part in preserving our planet by implementing national policies and programmes based on domestic social and economic realities, including solid waste management, water quality improvement, control of soil and coastal erosion, forestry management, agricultural and fisheries development and preservation of our marine environment. In Rio, we endorsed an implementation programme known as Agenda 21. It addresses the major issues related to sustainable development. It charts the way to improved living standards in developing countries. We must now translate this blueprint into tangible action by providing the financial resources for its implementation. Within the programme, access to the resources must not be tied to conditions that would impose further burdens on the people of developing countries. Such resources must be made available on preferential terms, with special concessions for small island developing countries. I can stress the urgency of this requirement in no better way than to repeat what I said to the historic assembly in Rio:

> "We cannot aspire to save the planet for future generations, while consigning the poor, the underprivileged, the underdeveloped of this generation to a life of persistent misery and deprivation."

The task is enormous, the challenge is monumental, but within the international community we have the tools. All that is left is for us to summon the commitment to preserve, develop and manage our combined heritage with the objective of guaranteeing a better quality of life for all people, everywhere.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.